

Purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)

Purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) is another way you can contribute to the Green Power Community Challenge.

RECs represent the environmental benefits of renewable energy. Though some of the energy available in the grid is generated using a renewable resource, this clean energy can't be distinguished from the millions of other electrons moving through the grid to reach your home or business. Therefore, RECs quantify the amount of clean energy a generator has produced and transmitted to the grid. Purchasing RECs allow you the right to claim the environmental benefits of renewable electricity generation. As renewable generators produce electricity, they create one REC for every 1,000 kilowatt-hours (or 1 megawatt-hour) of electricity placed on the grid. Buyers can select RECs based on the generation source (e.g., wind, solar, geothermal), when the generation occurred, as well as the location of the renewable generator.

QUICK TIPS

- One REC represents and conveys the environmental and other non-power attributes of one megawatt-hour of renewable electricity generation.
- RECS can provide more choices and more competitive prices.
- RECs offset greenhouse gas emissions associated with purchased electricity.

Governments, businesses and individuals can purchase RECS to meet their environmental goals for renewable energy generation, avoid carbon dioxide emissions associated with conventional energy generation, reduce air pollution, hedge against potential future electricity price increases, and demonstrate sustainable leadership. When you buy clean energy from an energy supplier, you receive the REC with the electricity service. When you buy a REC through a REC Marketer, you're just purchasing the environmental benefit of the clean energy without the electricity service. This flexibility allows you to more options and competitive prices to offset the pollution from fossil-fuel-sourced electricity.

When you purchase RECs, you can buy RECs equivalent to any amount of your total electricity use. Buying RECs in an amount equal to your electricity use allows you to offset all of the emissions, or you could choose to offset a portion of your electricity use. Regardless of how many you decide to purchase, as a REC consumer, you are supporting the addition of clean electricity—and its environmental benefits—to the power grid.

Resources for Purchasing RECs:

- The [U.S. Department of Energy](#) provides a summary of the nationally available renewable energy certificate (REC) products available to residents and businesses.
- [Regional REC tracking systems](#) are available to track and substantiate green power and environmental claims.
- [Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection](#) provides addition tips for purchasing renewable energy certificate (REC) products.
- US EPA's [Green Power Partnership Renewable Energy Certificates](#) (RECs)

If your home or business purchases RECs, please e-mail greenpower@rockvillemd.gov the following information so that your contribution will count toward the Challenge: Site address (at least street name); green power provider and product name; kWh/year of green power purchased; REC energy resource mix (% of wind, solar, etc.); and REC 3rd party certification status (No, Green-e, Clean-e, CRT, Ecologo/TerraChoice or other).